



Remote reporting in the ninth-floor press center: a fair trial but a lazy press?

pool. Spectators' reactions—and the Bundy audience of oddly fascinated young women made for interesting watching—were all but unreported."

Steve Tello, however, is pleased with the fruits of his labors. "It was the biggest and most elaborate setup of its kind, and it showed what you can do when there's adequate pre-planning," says the

TV producer. "The days of quick-and-dirty courtroom coverage by the electronic media are numbered."

Judge Cowart was pleased, too. "I think what this whole arrangement here at the Bundy trial is all about is accuracy," he said in his office the night before the case went to the jury. "The reporting is just more accurate under these condi-

tions. The First and Sixth Amendments don't need to be in combat. Sometimes there's a conflict, and when there is, I think the Sixth should prevail. But most of the time they are not irreconcilable."

Mark Pinsky

Mark Pinsky covered the Bundy case for several newspapers and magazines.

## Knight-Ridder discovers the world

Knight-Ridder has staked \$600,000 on the first phase of a proposition that must seem risky to less imaginative newspaper chains: that Americans are interested in foreign news. Anyone who has idled in a gasoline line realizes how dependent the U.S. is on the rest of the world. But nobody would know it from watching the organizations that now control 71 percent of the nation's daily newspaper readership. Not a single chain bothers to field a comprehensive foreign staff.

The thirty-one-paper Knight-Ridder group aims to change that. News bureaus have been opened in London and firmly scheduled for Singapore, with six others planned for Beijing, Vienna, Nairobi, Tokyo, Jerusalem, and Mexico City.

This constitutes a welcome revolution. Studies indicate that, after years of decline, foreign news fills no more than 10 percent of newspaper newsholes. The ranks of foreign correspondents, once the elite corps of the trade, have thinned so dramatically that they are now an endangered species.

Knight-Ridder is betting that protecting the breed can help solve other problems. Chief strategist James Batten, a corporate vice president, is putting together a system that relies on personal

ties and financial interest, on the assumption that editors directly involved in planning foreign coverage with reporters they know—and whose expenses they are aware of—will be receptive to their stories and ambitious in playing them. "We're aiming for high-impact stuff," says Batten, "and we want it to be relevant." Both he and Don Carter, who heads the chain's sixteen medium-sized dailies, also expect the new bureaus to help keep experienced reporters in the chain. As Batten puts it, "There just isn't any doubt that we have lost some first-class reporters because they wanted foreign experience and we didn't have the bureaus."

**T**he first priority is the reporting; and there are some innovations in store. Stories will benefit the chain's national wire service, but the operation will not be centralized along traditional lines. Instead, each of Knight-Ridder's four big-city dailies will get two bureaus to run as the paper—not the chain—sees fit. The *Detroit Free Press* will staff eastern Europe and black Africa, concentrating on stories of particular interest to that city's large minority populations. Similar reasoning gave coverage of Japan and Mexico to the *San*

*Jose Mercury* and *News*, and Israel to *The Miami Herald*. The *Herald*, the chain's flagship paper, will also get the prestigious Beijing bureau, when and if the Chinese come through with a visa.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* is already in the foreign-bureau business, its London office having opened this August, with Singapore to follow in September. National editor James Naughton describes both as suitcase posts to be staffed by bachelors with orders to travel. "They will give us a very mobile presence in Asia and western Europe, and a terrific base for covering parts of Africa," he says with evident excitement. Correspondents are being asked to write about the impact of leaders and events, and running political stories will be largely left to others "so we can zig," as Naughton puts it, "when others zag."

The *Inquirer's* leadership is fitting. Last year editor Eugene Roberts sent reporter Richard Ben Cramer to the Middle East to make sense out of the confusion. He came back with a Pulitzer Prize-winning series that demonstrated what could be accomplished by covering foreign affairs with the same close attention most papers now lavish only on backyard stories.

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